

VIRGINIA ARGUS.

[XIIIth YEAR.]

A FREE PRESS MAINTAINS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE.

[No. 1250.]

RICHMOND:—PRINTED (ON TUESDAYS AND FRIDAYS) BY SAMUEL PLEASANTS, JUNIOR, PRINTER TO THE COMMONWEALTH

[Four Dollars Per Annum....paid in advance.]

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1866.

[12 1-2 Cents Single.]

LAND FOR SALE.

THE subscriber wishes to sell 250 acres of land, lying in Chesterfield county, within six miles of Manchester. The advantages of small farms near large towns are too obvious and generally admitted, as not to require particular enumeration. Any person wishing to purchase may see the land and know the terms by applying to Mr. John Branch, residing in Manchester, or the subscriber, near Buckingham courthouse.

Archibald Branch.

September 2, 1865.

To Rent,

A HOUSE at the Falling Gardens. Apply to the Editor or to D. Wilson, who will give cash for a few thousand pounds of SENECA or RATTLE SNAKE ROOT; also for BEESWAX and LINSSEED OIL.

Richmond, Dec. 5th, 1865.

W. Wardlaw,

HAS RECEIVED HIS FULL SUPPLY OF MEDICINES.

By the ship *Rolla*, from London.—Also, a great variety of PAINTS, VARNISHES, SURGEONS' INSTRUMENTS, PATENT MEDICINES, &c. &c. And by the ship *George*, from Liverpool, a large supply of GLASS and SHOP GLASS.

Those who favor him with their orders may depend on being supplied with every article in his line on the most liberal terms.

The citizens of Richmond are requested, when they apply at his shop, by a child or servant to put the name of the article wanted on paper, to prevent mistakes.

DOCT. WILSON,

TAKES the liberty to observe that he continues his APOTHECARY SHOP at the Bell-Tavern, where may generally be had MEDICINES of every kind in general use, as well as other articles in the Drug line, of good quality and at fair prices; of which persons disposed to buy may satisfy themselves by calling at his shop.

He also begs leave to observe, that he professes to practice Physic in all its branches. Persons of needy circumstances will be prescribed for gratis by paying the retail prices of his medicines.

Richmond, Oct. 3d, 1865.

Ten Dollars Reward for a Horse,

TAKEN from the main-street, opposite the post-office, in this city, between 6 and 7 o'clock, in the evening of the 21st inst. a bright bay HORSE, with a Saddle and Bridle, supposed to be 5 years old last spring, about 5 feet 10 or 11 inches high, coarse made, two or three white spots on his back, occasioned by the saddle, and a hurt that is not hard over, tho' well, and I have been informed, a small white spot on the inside of one of his thighs; has rather a thick mane, his gate a strong steady trot, carries his head low, and a sleepy countenance when still. The saddle is double skirted, and the stirrups iron-plated, has been in use about twelve months, a double reined bridle with a leather curb. Whoever delivers the horse, saddle and bridle to me, near the basin, shall receive the above reward; and Five Dollars for the horse alone, if taken out of this county, and half that sum if within the county. 'Tis suspected he was rode off, not with a view to keep.

SAMUEL PARSONS.

Richmond, 12th Mo. 25th, 1865.

Louisa County Court, November

15th, 1865.

Charles Barrett, surviving partner of Charles and Thomas Barrett, plf. AGAINST John Lemay, heir at law of John Lemay, dec'd, def.

THE defendant not having entered his appearance, and given security according to the act of assembly and the rules of this court; and it appearing to the satisfaction of the court, that he is not an inhabitant of this state; Therefore, on the motion of the said plaintiff by his attorney, It is ordered and decreed by the court, that the said defendant do appear here on the second Monday in March next and answer the plaintiff's bill; and that a copy of this order be forthwith inserted in some of the newspapers printed in the city of Richmond for eight weeks successively, and published at the front door of the courthouse of this county on some court day.

A Copy, JOHN POINDEXTER c. l. c.

Goodland County Court, 16th December, 1865.

John Michie, plf. On an Injunction AGAINST John Salmon, def. In Chancery.

THE defendant not having entered his appearance, and given security according to the act of assembly and the rules of this court; and it appearing to the satisfaction of the court that he is not an inhabitant of this state; on the motion of the plaintiff by his attorney, It is ordered, that the said defendant do appear here and answer the bill of the plaintiff on or before the third Monday in April next, and that a copy of this order be forthwith inserted for two months successively in some newspaper published in the city of Richmond; and that another copy be posted at the front door of the courthouse of this county.

A copy—Tere, WILLIAM MILLER, c. c. e.

Just received and for sale at S. Pleasants' Book-Store, near the Bridge,

THE FOLLOWING GENUINE Patent Medicines.

Hill's Balsam of Honey
Turlington's Balsam
Godfrey's Cordial
Essence of Peppermint
Steers Opodeldoc
Oriental Cerate, for the cure of outward piles, scalds, sore legs, burns
obstinate eruptions, &c
British Oil
Hooper's Female Pills
Anderson's Scotts do.
The celebrated Specific
Pills, for the cure of the outward and inward Piles.

At a court held for Cumberland county, the 25th of November, 1865.

James Morton & Co. Plaintiffs, In

AGAINST Drury Watson and John Bibb, Defs. Chancery.

THIS day came the plaintiffs by Henry E. Watkins their attorney, and the defendant Drury Watson not having entered his appearance and given security according to the acts of assembly and the rules of this court, and it appearing to the satisfaction of the court, that the said Watson is not an inhabitant of this state; on the motion of the complainants by their attorney, It is ordered, that the said defendant do appear here on the fourth Monday in March next and answer the complainants' bill; and that a copy of this order be forthwith inserted in some one of the newspapers published in the city of Richmond for two months successively, and posted at the front door of the courthouse on some court day.

A copy—Autent,

Sam. Hobson, D. C. C. C.

Advertisement.

WILL be sold, to the highest bidder, on Monday, the 17th day of March, 1866, on the premises, my TRACT OF LAND, on the waters of Ward's Fork, on the main road leading to Booker's and Cole's ferry, three miles above Charlotte courthouse, containing by estimation 512 acres more or less. The quality of this land is well adapted to the culture of tobacco, corn, wheat, &c. and the situation as a public place is very advantageous, having been a long time known as Price's race ground. It is unnecessary to enter into a minute detail of the good qualities or advantages of the situation of this place, as it is presumable any person wishing to purchase will view the land before the day of sale, which they may do by applying to the subscriber who lives on the premises.

SHORT JONES.

CATALOGUE OF A VALUABLE COLLECTION OF BOOKS,

FOR SALE AT THE PRINTING OFFICE AND BOOK STORE OF S. PLEASANTS.

Among them are some of the newest & most interesting English publications, in elegant binding.

Hooper's Recreations, 4 vols.
Bigland's Letters
Schomberg's Naval Chronology, 6 vols.
Bisset's Geo. 3, 2 vols.
Sale's Koran, 2 vols.
Paris as it is and as it was, 2 vols.
Wilkinson on Galvanism, 3 vols.
Phillimore on Chess
Jones's life of Horne
Chatterton's works, 3 vols.
Bates's Rural Philosophy
Burke's works, 8 vols.
Dibdin's life, 4 vols.
Pindar's works, 5 vols.
Naval Chronicle, 11 v.
Mariner's Chronicle, 4.
Southey's Tales
Home, a new novel, in 5 vols.
Public Characters, 6 v.
Rural Recreations, 2 v.
Trotter on Drunkenness
Sugar on Women, 3 v.
Brett's Geography
Keith on the Globes
Swiss Emigrants
Sentimental Journey
Natural History
Dictionary of Polite Literature
Pilkington's memoirs
Gentle Shepherd
Shenstone's Poems
Thomson's Seasons
Gray's Poems
Falconer's Shipwreck
Goldsmith's Poems
Baker's Livy, 6 vols.
Betham's Biographical Dictionary

Also, just received and for sale as above, Ferguson's Astronomy
Scott's Gazetteer, 4 v.
Young's Lat. Dictory
Lady's Museum, elegt. bind'g with plates 14 v.
Do, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 & 14, to complete sets
Ferguson's Lectures
Guthrie's Grammar, edition of 1865
Clarke's Homer
Greek Lexicons
Lucian's Dialogues
Greek Testaments
Grammars
Perrin's Exercises

THE WHOLE OF THE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE LATE EDITION OF THE

Debates of the Convention,

Published by Messrs. Ritchie & Worsley and Augustine Davis, having been transferred by those gentlemen to Samuel Pleasants, Jun. subscribers will please to take notice, that the books will be delivered by him (only) in Richmond, and by such persons as he may appoint for the purpose in other places.

Amelia, January 26, 1865.

TAKEN up by the subscriber early in December, FOUR HOGS, marked with a crop & two slits in the left ear, and a slit and half crop in the right—Appraised to ten pounds sixteen shillings.

W3t

John Robertson.

FOUND, on the counter of Lowndes & Pierce, A SMALL SUM OF MONEY, which the owner may have again by paying the expense of this advertisement.

January 27th, 1866.

House of Delegates, Monday, January 20.

CALL OF A COVENTION.

A motion being made, that the house resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to take into consideration a petition from the counties of Henry and Patrick, requesting the legislature to adopt means for calling a convention to revise and amend the state constitution?

MR. BALL moved that the question be postponed till the 31st of March. He was opposed to calling a convention at this time on account of our political relations. We should perhaps be soon engaged in a contest with some of the foreign powers. On prospects abroad are cloudy, and a revision, such as the present question contemplated required, beyond any other, the enjoyment of complete sunshine. It would be impossible to assemble a convention and revise the constitution, without raising a considerable ferment. It was idle to grasp at perfection. The happiness of the people was what we all aimed at; but under the present constitution, the people were contented and happy. Some men are, to be sure, fond of change; but this is a fondness as yet confined to their own bosoms: the people at large have not partaken of it. There may be some defects in the present constitution; Mr. Ball admitted there were some; but it was perhaps impossible to get clear of them altogether. If we call a convention; if we open such a wide door for amendment, there is not perhaps a single feature in the present constitution, which we may be able to retain. Those who framed it at first were pure and enlightened men; they assembled at a favorable time; could we now expect more able framers, or a more propitious period?

MR. BURWELL, although he was indisposed, and extremely feeble, felt it a duty he owed to the petition he had presented, and people he represented, to oppose the motion of postponement. It was surprising that the gentleman had attempted to dispose of a question so important without discussion. How will the people ever understand the defects of their constitution; how are they to be impressed with the necessity of a reform, unless the proposition is fairly met and fully investigated?

Whence arises the danger of examining the constitution and convening a convention? Are we afraid that the Roman Decemvirs, they will declare their sittings permanent and their powers unlimited? If this be not the danger, whence then arises all this apprehension? Against all these usurpations, we had a bulwark, which would never fail us, in the information and intelligence of the people. Besides, this argument, if it proves anything at all, proves infinitely too much. It would teach us to confide in powers at all to any set of men from an apprehension that they would abuse it. If the constitution be defective, it was proper to amend it; to expunge its imperfections and retain all its valuable features. What kind of an argument that was it to say, that we should make no effort to introduce the most positive benefits, from a vague apprehension that uncertain evils may possibly ensue? Do not our ordinary legislatures possess the most extensive powers? Still do they not meet and transact public business without public usurpation? They meet here to consult for the public welfare, and not to violate the rights of the people, from whom they received their power. If we have any apprehensions from the abused authority of a convention, why should we exempt our ordinary legislature from similar suspicion? It is not to be denied that the present assembly can divide among themselves the money in the treasury. The stock, which the state owns in the bank may take the same direction. The armory; the whole of the public property of every description, may be squandered without a remedy, or plundered without shame. Why then is not such a scene exhibited here? It is because no man would dare to make such a proposition. It is because the public indignation; the confounding integrity of the majority of the people, is prepared to cover such a wretch with endless ruin. The people must employ agents to conduct the general affairs of society. The important concerns of the world require that confidence should be reposed in men; and happily, experience has here demonstrated that necessity is not at war with the interests of society. Why then should we dread the assembling of a convention, when its members are to be appointed by the very same people who select their legislators and on far more interesting concerns? Will the superior value of the trust diminish the care and discernment employed in their selection? Is it to be expected that any agents would be preferred but those who are most completely

qualified for the great purposes, which are to be confided? On such interesting questions, we have a right to expect that such men only will be called to the service of their country, who have age, discretion, and talents, to recommend them. The character of the Virginians is sufficient to fortify us in that hope. Their love of peace and the uncommon share of information diffused through the various parts of the state, are a sufficient guarantee for the virtue of the selection and the discretion of the agent. And should a convention ever be summoned, we might expect that another crisis would arrive, whose termination would serve to strengthen the principles of a republican government, & increase our confidence in the wisdom & virtue of our fellow citizens. I wish, said Mr. B. to have an opportunity of expressing my opinion of the defects of the present constitution. I wish that the people themselves should have an opportunity of understanding the subject and expressing their opinions. Let us, then, submit the proposition at once to their consideration.

We have been told (said Mr. B.) that there are a few restless, discontented individuals, who complain, and that the fault is in them and not in the constitution. Certainly I myself enjoy the most perfect personal liberty: I am happy and contented; my property in common with that of the people at large is sacred and respected. But there is yet a class of people in the community who are very differently circumstanced; men who are divested of all political rights, and left at the mercy of their governors. I allude, Sir, to those who are deprived of the right of suffrage.

The Bill of Rights declares, that "men cannot be deprived of their property for public uses, without their own consent, or that of their representatives, so elected nor bound by any law to which they have not in like manner, assented for the public good." Yet does not every person know, that nine tenths of the free men of the state are disfranchised, and excluded from all agency in the councils which give the law binding upon the people of the commonwealth? Men who are thus deprived of the privilege of electing representatives, are as much enslaved as those unfortunate beings who inhabit the Turkish Empire. If they enjoy more personal liberty; if they suffer less vexations in the management of their property; it is because their masters are more indulgent, & not that they are less absolute. This state of political existence is peculiarly oppressive, since the Bill of Rights in the clause which has been recited, promises the reverse. Upon what principles, then has this sacred and invaluable provision been violated? for what purposes? We shall be told perhaps, that these people pay no taxes, and that they should not therefore participate in the administration of the government. But is this argument correct? Are land-holders the only persons, who pay taxes? Men without land possess slaves, horses and other property, subject to taxation. Even when distillate of these, they render personal services to the government? Are not these to be deducted from the little pitance allotted to themselves and a dependent family, and under this point of view may they not fairly, be considered as a tax upon their industry and subsistence? So far then as the argument of taxation applies, it is obviously unfounded. But are governments instituted for the purposes of taxation alone? Let it be recollected that the laws which define crimes and punishments, and by whose influence the personal liberty of every individual is secured or endangered; the laws which regulate the mode of transferring and acquiring property; and let it also be recollected, that the laws which apportion the military services of the citizen; are interesting to every one, whether he be a land-holder or not. No doubt it is right that society should demand some "evidence of common interest with, and attachment to the community." The qualifications of age, colour and sex were no doubt indispensable. For in what situation should we be placed, were we to see the sable race crowding round our polls and controuling our elections? For the same reason perhaps, minors and females should be excluded from the right of suffrage, though for my own part (said Mr. B.) I have no very strong objection to the latter. But why should this pledge consist in property, or why should one species of property be preferred to another? Where is the justice of requiring 25 instead of one or 25,000 acres as the qualification of an elector? Let it be granted that some standard is necessary; but let that standard be one which embraces the greatest possible portion of the people. Can there be any more rational pledge of attachment to the community than birth? It is birth, which engenders that indescribable sensation, called patriotism. The poor landless Virginian feels more real

love for this, his native country; a more ardent zeal to support its dignity and independence, than the wealthy foreigner, who has spread his titles over an extensive soil, and whose lofty palace rises like an exhalation to the skies. And yet what a paradox do our laws produce! Whilst the letter is admitted to all the rights of citizenship, the former is completely excluded. If we have indeed no confidence in the attachment of these people to their native country, why in times of the utmost peril, when we are threatened with foreign invasions or domestic convulsions, do we call forth, embody and arm them, for the public defence? Are you not afraid (said Mr. B.) to trust them with weapons, which may be turned against yourselves? As for my part, my mind revolts against the charge. I abhor the monstrous injustice of saying to the soldier, who has impaired his constitution, wasted his fortune, and spilt his blood: "you have saved your country from ruin and devastation. But you cannot be trusted even with the election of a representative." I am a freeholder myself, Sir; yet rather than be guilty of such crying ingratitude, I would abridge my own power and divide with these men my portion of sovereignty.

In all republican governments, it is proper to begin by establishing as little discrimination, as possible between the different members of the community. This principle is absolutely just in itself, but it becomes still more important as a practical maxim, when it is recollected that society is irresistibly progressive. As it advances in almost every country, it naturally leads to the accumulation of property in the hands of particular individuals. Such has been the history of England, such the history of Germany; such the history of every nation in Europe. The result has always been inauspicious to the cause of the people; favorable to privileged orders, and productive of civil confusion. Look at Ireland. Why has that gallant nation been so long oppressed and agitated? It was because a large portion of her people was excluded from a share of the elective franchise. What produced the dissensions in ancient Rome? Why did the people secede to the Sacred Mount and refuse to appear under the banners of the republic? It was because they had received from that republic nothing but oppression and insult. It was because the Patricians and the Plebeians, in other words those who were freeholders and those who were not, had divided the population of Rome. Let us beware (said Mr. B.) that the same casualty does not happen to ourselves. When an enemy arises upon us; when the landless citizen is enlisted in our ranks to fight the battles of his country, let us beware that like the ancient Plebeians he may not retire to some sacred mountain, and refuse to resist the enemy. "You have denied us (he may say) the right of suffrage; you have divided among you the honors and the treasures of the government. Fight then your own battles; when our country chooses to treat us as her children, by admitting us to share in the benefits of our birthright, she may then expect us to appear in the defence of her rights. But till then, let the haughty landholder go forth to defend her."

We may be told, however, said Mr. B. that all this is mere idle speculation. We may be called upon for proofs of the injury, which actually results from this political discrimination. I could produce several to the consideration of the house; but a single one is sufficient for the illustration of the evil. The law appointing processioners to mark and ascertain the boundaries of land, allows to each of them a compensation, to be defrayed by the people at large, and to be collected in the shape of a poll-tax. The consequence is, that an expense intended for marking and securing the landed property of the nation, is in part levied in the most grievous and oppressive manner, upon men, not in the slightest degree concerned in the arrangement.

But the are other defects in our present constitution, which must command our attention and regret.

What shall we say of the organization of the legislature? It is an admirable feature in the constitution, that it has given almost all the power to the legislature; to men annually elected by, and responsible to the people, for the exercise of their authority. But even, the legislature itself is by no means perfect in its structure. There are certain powers given and some restrictions imposed upon it, which a wise politician would be willing to change. The legislature, for instance, is entrusted with the power of electing the governor. What has been the consequence? That a man of great talents be sometimes elevated to the chair of state; though a meteor may sometimes appear to illuminate the political horizon, yet at the end of 3 years he vanishes only to make the succeeding gloom more melancholy and im-